

In the Claims

CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A plasma etching method comprising:  
etching a semiconductor wafer having a photoresist material thereon with a plasma etching material, the plasma etching material forming a polymer comprising carbon and a halogen over at least some internal surfaces of a plasma etch chamber;  
after forming the polymer, plasma etching using a gas effective to etch polymer from chamber internal surfaces and photoresist from the semiconductor wafer; the gas having a hydrogen component effective to form a gaseous hydrogen halide from halogen liberated from the polymer; and  
wherein the gas comprises O<sub>2</sub>, and wherein the hydrogen component and O<sub>2</sub> are provided in the chamber during the plasma etching at a volumetric ratio of the one to the another of at least 0.1:1 of O<sub>2</sub> to the hydrogen component.
2. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the halogen is selected from the group consisting of fluorine, chlorine and mixtures thereof.
3. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the halogen comprises fluorine.

Claims 4-5 (canceled).

6. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the hydrogen component comprises NH<sub>3</sub>.

7. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the hydrogen component comprises H<sub>2</sub>.

Claims 8-9 (canceled).

10. (Previously presented) A plasma etching method comprising:  
etching a semiconductor wafer with a plasma etching material, the material forming a polymer comprising carbon and a halogen over at least some internal surfaces of a plasma etch chamber;

after forming the polymer, plasma etching at subatmospheric pressure using a gas effective to etch polymer from chamber internal surfaces; the gas comprising a carbon compound effective to getter the halogen from the etched polymer; and

wherein the gas comprises an oxygen component forming an oxygen and carbon compound mixture, and wherein the carbon compound is provided at from about 5% to about 80% by volume of the oxygen and carbon compound mixture.

11. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the gettering comprises forming a gaseous hydrogen halide from the etched halogen.

12. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the gettering comprises forming a gaseous  $COA_x$  compound, where A is the etched halogen.

13. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the carbon compound comprises a hydrocarbon.

Claims 14-15 (canceled).

16. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the carbon compound comprises a C-O bond.

17. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the carbon compound comprises CO.

18. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the carbon compound comprises CO formed from  $CO_2$  injected into the chamber.

19. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the halogen comprises fluorine.

Claim 20 (canceled).

21. (Previously presented) A plasma etching method comprising: positioning a semiconductor wafer on a wafer receiver within a plasma etch chamber; first plasma etching material on the semiconductor wafer with a gas comprising carbon and a halogen, a polymer comprising carbon and the halogen forming over at least some internal surfaces of the plasma etch chamber during the first plasma etching; after the first plasma etching and with the wafer on the wafer receiver, second plasma etching at subatmospheric pressure using a gas effective to etch polymer from chamber internal surfaces and getter halogen liberated from the polymer to restrict further etching of the material on the semiconductor wafer during the second plasma etching, the gas comprising at least H<sub>2</sub> and NH<sub>3</sub>; and wherein the second plasma etching is conducted with the receiver having a temperature which is allowed to float.

22. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the receiver is biased during the first plasma etching and provided at ground or floating potential during the second plasma etching.

23. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas comprises hydrogen which combines with the halogen during the second plasma etching to form a gaseous hydrogen halide.

24. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the second etching is conducted at a chamber pressure of from about 30 mTorr to about 5 Torr.

25. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the halogen comprises fluorine.

26. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas comprises an oxygen component.

27. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas comprises  $\text{NH}_3$ , with hydrogen from the  $\text{NH}_3$  combining with the halogen during the second plasma etching to form a gaseous hydrogen halide.

28. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas comprises  $\text{H}_2$  which combines with the halogen during the second plasma etching to form a gaseous hydrogen halide.

Claim 29 (canceled).

30. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the first and second plasma etchings are conducted at subatmospheric pressure, and the wafer remaining *in situ* on the receiver intermediate the first and second etchings, and maintaining the chamber at a subatmospheric pressure at all time intermediate the first and second plasma etchings.

Claim 31 (canceled).

32. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas comprises a carbon compound effective for the gettering.

33. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 32 wherein the carbon compound comprises a hydrocarbon.

Claims 34-35 (canceled).

36. (Previously presented) A plasma etching method comprising:  
positioning a semiconductor wafer on a wafer receiver within a plasma etch  
chamber, the semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed thereon;  
negatively biasing the wafer receiver to a range of 100 to 400 volts;  
first plasma etching material on the semiconductor wafer through openings  
formed in the photoresist layer with a gas comprising carbon and a halogen, a polymer  
comprising carbon and the halogen forming over at least some internal surfaces of the  
plasma etch chamber during the first plasma etching; and  
after the first plasma etching and with the wafer on the wafer receiver, second  
plasma etching at subatmospheric pressure using a gas having one or more  
components effective to etch photoresist from the wafer and polymer from chamber  
internal surfaces and getter halogen liberated from the polymer to restrict further etching  
of the material on the semiconductor wafer during the second plasma etching, the gas  
having the one or more components comprising at least H<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub>.

37. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 36  
wherein one of the gas components comprises hydrogen which combines with the  
halogen during the second plasma etching to form a gaseous hydrogen halide.

38. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein one of the  
gas components comprises O<sub>2</sub> and another is hydrogen atom containing.

39. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein one of the gas components comprises O<sub>2</sub> and another is hydrogen atom containing, said one component and said another component being provided in the chamber during the second plasma etching at a volumetric ratio of the one to the another of at least 0.1:1 of O<sub>2</sub> to the hydrogen component.

40. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the halogen comprises fluorine.

41. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein one of the gas components comprises NH<sub>3</sub>, with hydrogen from the NH<sub>3</sub> combining with the halogen during the second plasma etching to form a gaseous hydrogen halide.

42. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein one of the gas components comprises H<sub>2</sub> which combines with the halogen during the second plasma etching to form a gaseous hydrogen halide.

Claim 43 (canceled).

44. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the first and second plasma etchings are conducted at subatmospheric pressure, and the wafer remaining *in situ* on the receiver intermediate the first and second etchings, and maintaining the chamber at a subatmospheric pressure at all time intermediate the first and second plasma etchings.

Claim 45 (canceled).

46. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the gas comprises a carbon compound effective for the gettering.

47. (Previously Presented) A plasma etching method comprising:  
positioning a semiconductor wafer on an electrostatic chuck within an inductively coupled plasma etch chamber, the semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed on an insulative oxide layer, the photoresist layer having contact opening patterns formed therethrough;

first plasma etching contact openings within the insulative oxide on the semiconductor wafer through the contact opening patterns formed in the photoresist layer with a gas comprising carbon and fluorine, a polymer comprising carbon and fluorine forming over at least some internal surfaces of the plasma etch chamber during the first plasma etching; and

after the first plasma etching and with the wafer on the electrostatic chuck, providing the electrostatic chuck at ground or floating potential while second plasma etching at subatmospheric pressure using a gas comprising an oxygen component and a hydrogen component effective to etch photoresist from the wafer and polymer from chamber internal surfaces, and forming HF during the second plasma etching from fluorine liberated from the polymer to restrict widening of the contact openings formed in the insulative oxide resulting from further etching of the material on the semiconductor wafer during the second plasma etching, the hydrogen component comprising at least a hydrocarbon and NH<sub>3</sub>.

48. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the oxygen comprises O<sub>2</sub>.

Claim 49 (canceled).

50. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the hydrogen component comprises H<sub>2</sub>.

Claims 51-52 (canceled).

53. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the first and second plasma etchings are conducted at subatmospheric pressure, and the wafer remaining *in situ* on the electrostatic chuck intermediate the first and second etchings, and maintaining the chamber at a subatmospheric pressure at all time intermediate the first and second plasma etchings.

54. (Previously presented) A plasma etching method comprising:  
positioning a semiconductor wafer on an electrostatic chuck within an inductively coupled plasma etch chamber, the semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed on an insulative oxide layer, the photoresist layer having contact opening patterns formed therethrough;

first plasma etching contact openings within the insulative oxide on the semiconductor wafer through the contact opening patterns formed in the photoresist layer with a gas comprising carbon and fluorine, a polymer comprising carbon and fluorine forming over at least some internal surfaces of the plasma etch chamber during the first plasma etching; and

after the first plasma etching and with the wafer on the electrostatic chuck, providing the electrostatic chuck at ground or floating potential while second plasma etching at subatmospheric pressure using a gas comprising an oxygen component and a carbon component effective to etch photoresist from the wafer and polymer from chamber internal surfaces, and gettering fluorine liberated from the polymer during the second plasma etching with the carbon component to restrict widening of the contact openings formed in the insulative oxide resulting from further etching of the material on the semiconductor wafer during the second plasma etching.

55. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the gettering comprises forming a gaseous hydrogen halide from the etched halogen.

56. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the gettering comprises forming a gaseous  $\text{COA}_x$  compound, where A is the etched halogen.

57. (Original) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the carbon compound comprises a C-O bond.

58. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the second plasma etching is conducted with the receiver having a temperature without maintaining the temperature within a controlled temperature range.

59. (Previously presented) A plasma etching method comprising:  
positioning a semiconductor wafer on an electrostatic chuck within an inductively coupled plasma etch chamber, the semiconductor wafer having a photoresist layer formed on an insulative oxide layer, the photoresist layer having contact opening patterns formed therethrough;

first plasma etching contact openings within the insulative oxide on the semiconductor wafer through the contact opening patterns formed in the photoresist layer with a gas comprising carbon and fluorine, a polymer comprising carbon and fluorine forming over at least some internal surfaces of the plasma etch chamber during the first plasma etching; and

after the first plasma etching and with the wafer on the electrostatic chuck, second plasma etching at subatmospheric pressure using a gas comprising O<sub>2</sub>, a carbon component and NH<sub>3</sub> effective to etch photoresist from the wafer and polymer from chamber internal surfaces, and gettering fluorine liberated from the polymer during the second plasma etching with the carbon component to restrict widening of the contact openings formed in the insulative oxide resulting from further etching of the material on the semiconductor wafer during the second plasma etching, providing the O<sub>2</sub> and NH<sub>3</sub> in the plasma etch chamber at 1,000 sccm and 60 sccm, respectively.

60. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 59 wherein the gas comprising the O<sub>2</sub>, the carbon component and the NH<sub>3</sub> further comprises H<sub>2</sub>.

61. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 59 wherein the carbon component comprises  $\text{CH}_4$ .

62. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the  $\text{O}_2$  is provided at a flow rate of 1000 sccm.

63. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the hydrogen component comprises at least  $\text{H}_2$  and  $\text{NH}_3$ .

64. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the hydrogen component comprises at least  $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

65. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the hydrogen component comprises  $\text{H}_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

66. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the hydrogen component comprises  $\text{N}_2$  at about 96% or greater and  $\text{H}_2$  at about 4% or less, by volume.

67. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the carbon compound comprises aldehyde.

68. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the carbon compound comprises ketone.

69. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas effective to etch the polymer comprises  $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

70. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas effective to etch the polymer comprises  $\text{H}_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

71. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the gas effective to etch the polymer comprises  $\text{N}_2$  at about 96% or greater and  $\text{H}_2$  at about 4% or less, by volume.

72. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the gas having the one or more components comprises  $\text{H}_2$  and  $\text{NH}_3$ .

73. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the gas having the one or more components comprises  $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

74. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the gas having the one or more components comprises  $\text{N}_2$  at about 96% or greater and  $\text{H}_2$  at about 4% or less, by volume.

75. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the hydrogen component comprises  $\text{CH}_4$ .

76. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the hydrogen component comprises  $\text{H}_2$  and  $\text{CH}_4$ .

77. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the hydrogen component comprises  $\text{N}_2$  at about 96% or greater and  $\text{H}_2$  at about 4% or less, by volume.

78. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the carbon component comprises aldehyde.

79. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the carbon component comprises ketone.

80. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

81. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

82. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

83. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

84. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

85. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

86. (Previously presented) The plasma etching method of claim 59 wherein the semiconductor wafer comprises silicon dioxide.

87. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 1 wherein the plasma etching material comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the plasma etching using the gas to etch polymer.

88. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 10 wherein the plasma etching material comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the plasma etching at the subatmospheric pressure.

89. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 21 wherein the first plasma etching comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the second plasma etching.

90. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 36 wherein the first plasma etching comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the second plasma etching.

91. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 47 wherein the first plasma etching comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the second plasma etching.

92. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 54 wherein the first plasma etching comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the second plasma etching.

93. (Currently amended) The plasma etching method of claim 59 wherein the first plasma etching comprises a different etchant chemistry relative to an etchant chemistry of the second plasma etching.